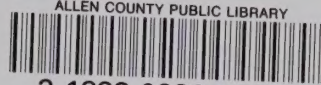


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*Wayne Co - Indiana*

# HISTORIC CENTERVILLE



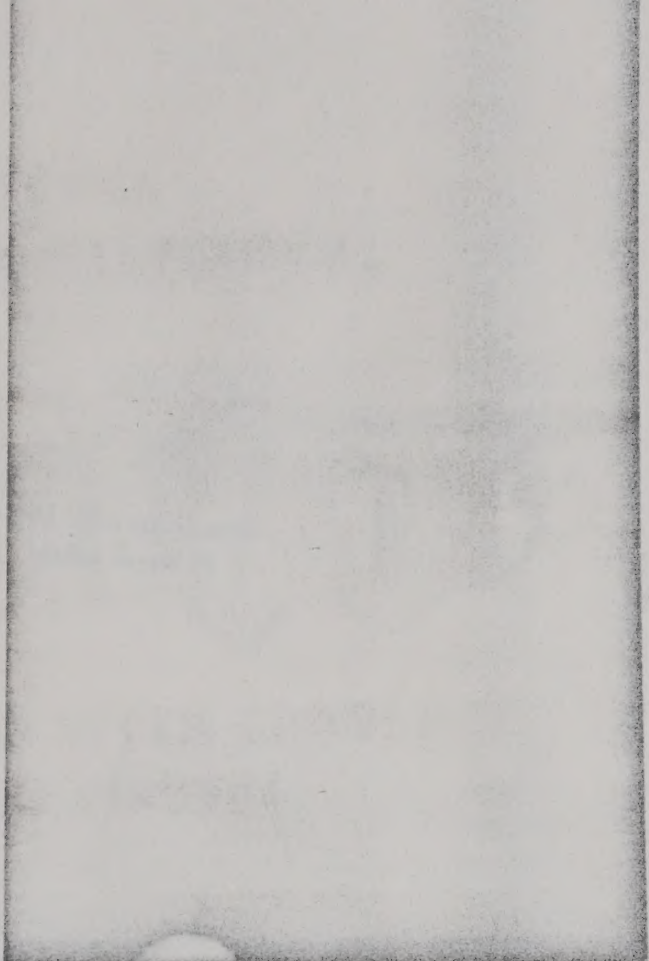
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Beverly Yount and John Nixon

CENTERVILLE, INDIANA

1959







# HISTORIC CENTERVILLE

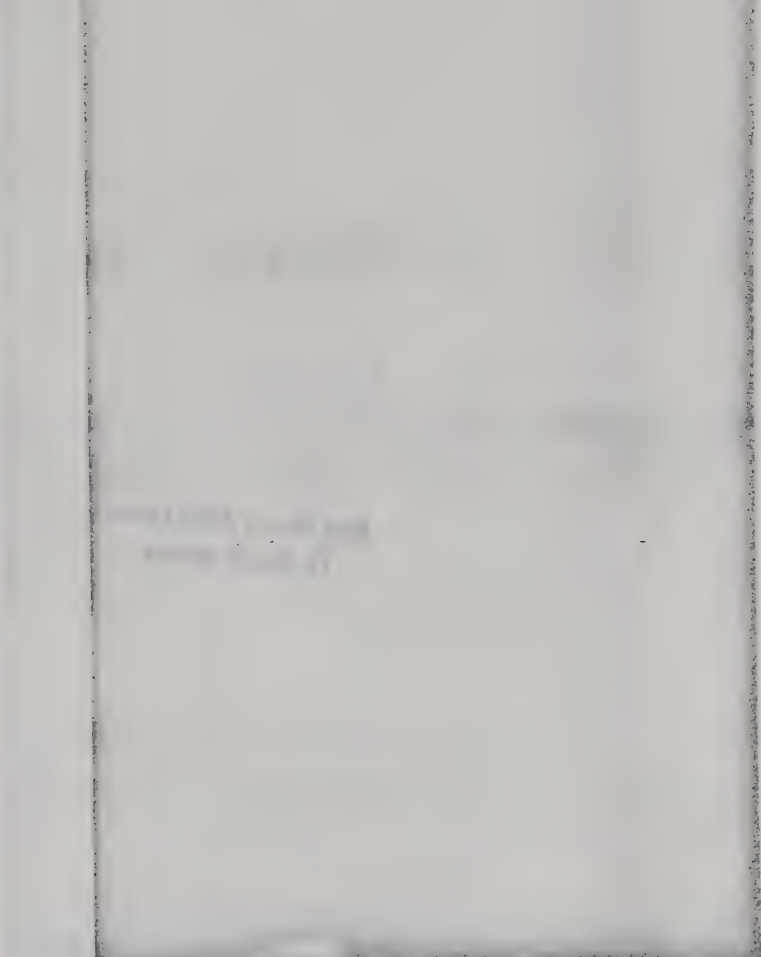


Compiled by  
Beverly Yount and John Nixon

CENTERVILLE, INDIANA

1959





# HISTORIC CENTERVILLE



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"Art, science, law, letters, statesmanship each  
have had their glorious part in the story of old  
Centerville."





## CENTERVILLE

Seldom have towns as small as Centerville produced so many eminent men, prominent in the affairs of State and Nation. It is doubtful, too, if any town in the state contributed more to Indiana's development during the first half century of the State's existence than did Centerville.

Centerville, platted October 20, 1814 and incorporated January 2, 1815, is located on the National Road (U. S. Route 40) in what could be called the geographical center of Wayne County.

Many of the old homes, still in good state of repair, were built flush with the sidewalk with the alleys arched over to give additional room overlooking the street.

During the time Centerville was the county seat (1818-1872), it was a thriving business town and its society was second to none in the state of Indiana.

The first mail that arrived at the new Hoosier capital in 1822 was delivered from Centerville, which was the terminal for mail from Dayton and Cincinnati.

A seminary was established in Centerville in 1827. It was later sold to a group of Methodists who changed the name to Whitewater College with Rev. Cyrus Nutt as President. He later became president of Indiana University.



Among the honored educators were Samuel K. Hoshour, Rawson Vaile, A. C. Shortridge and the Rev. Nutt. And among the students who became renowned were Ambrose Burnside, John Stevenson Tarkington, father of Booth Tarkington, Emily Meredith, mother of Meridith Nicholson, and Oliver P. Morton, Civil War Governor of Indiana. Lew Wallace, author of "Ben Hur," another student, delighted in retelling how he was soundly flogged by Samuel Hoshour for some mischief.

The College was sold in 1870 and became the public school building.

The hotels and taverns were important in early days. None was better known than the Lashley House as it was the headquarters for the prominent men of the legal profession. Mr. Lashley was considered the perfect host.

About 1824, John Scott published the first newspaper, the "Western Emporium" and a good deal of editorial sparring went on between Mr. Scott and the editor of Richmond's "Public Ledger." He also published "The Indiana Gazetteer" in 1826.

The oldest church which is still in existence is the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was organized in 1823 and consisted of seven members. A frame church was erected and in 1842, a brick structure took its place. It was the finest Methodist church in the State. It was here the Northern Indiana M. E. Conference was organized.





## ROSTER

### OLIVER P. MORTON (1823-1877)

First native born governor of Indiana. Born in Salisbury, Indiana. Admitted to the Bar in 1846. Elected lieutenant governor in 1860. Served two days when Gov. Lane resigned to serve in the U. S. Senate. Was elected for a second term. Served in U. S. Senate (1867-1877). Indiana War Governor.

### JONATHAN HARVEY (1817- )

Born in Center Township. "Champion Speller" of West Grove neighborhood. Treasurer of the State of Indiana (1860). Governor of Kansas.

### JOHN BURBANK (1827-1905)

Son of Isaac Burbank. Born in Centerville. Major in U. S. Army. Member of Nebraska legislature. First mavor and postmaster of Fall City, Nebr. Active in organizing the territory of Wyoming and was a candidate for governor of that commonwealth when he was appointed governor of Dakota by President Grant. Superintendent of Indian affairs from 1869-1875. During the term of Oliver P. Morton as Governor of Indiana, Mr. Burbank was his secretary.





**JOSEPH KIBBY (1853- )**

Born in Centerville. Was judge of the federal district Court. Governor of Arizona.

**GEORGE JULIAN (1817-1899)**

Born in Center Township, son of Isaac Julian. Congressman (1849) and candidate for Vice President on Free Soil Ticket (1852). Pioneer in movement for Women's Suffrage. Author of "Life of Joshua R. Giddings" (1892). Was one of the Committee which prepared articles of impeachment against Pres. Andrew Johnson.

**WILLIAM HENDRICKS (1783- )**

A distinguished member of the early Wayne County Bar, he served in Congress from 1816-1822. Second Governor of Indiana. U. S. Senator (1825-1837).

**JAMES B. RAY ( - )**

Clerk of Wayne Circuit Court (1819-1821). Was acting lieutenant governor (1824-1825). Admitted to Wayne Co. Bar in 1819. The State's third Governor (1825-1831). Brookville claims him as a native.

**JACOB B. JULIAN (1815-1898)**

Admitted to the Bar in 1839. Elected prosecuting attorney in 1844. Represented Wayne County in the State Legislature. Brother of George Julian.



**JAMES RARIDEN (1793-1856)**

Studied law under David Hoover. Admitted to Bar 1818. Elected several times to State Legislature. Congressman (1837-1841). A friend of Pres. Zachary Taylor and of Henry Clay who visited in Rariden's home in Center-ville. Was a man of sound judgment.

**WILLIAM MEREDITH (     -     )**

Civil War Captain and later head of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving during Grant's Administration. Grandfather of Meredith Nicholson.

**LAZARUS NOBLE (     -     )**

Clerk of Indiana Supreme Court. Adjutant General of Indiana during the Civil War. He was a nephew of General Noble and Gov. Noah Noble.

**SAMUEL HANNAH (1789-1869)**

A pioneer financier and leading lawyer. Clerk of Wayne Circuit Court. Served as sheriff of Wayne County (1822). Postmaster of Center-ville. One of three commissioners to locate a state road from the Ohio River to Lake Michigan. In 1846 was elected State treasurer. Was President of Indiana Central R. R.: Treasurer of Indiana & Bellefontaine R. R. in 1852. Treasurer of Indiana Central R. R. until 1864. Proprietor of the "American House."





**LOT BLOOMFIELD (      -1847)**

Was admitted to Wayne County Bar in 1822. One of the first trustees of Wayne County Seminary. Chosen as trustee of Indiana University, but did not qualify. Businessman.

**CHARLES H. TEST (      -      )**

Judge of Wayne Circuit Court (1830-1835). State Senator in 1840. Secretary of State 1849-1853). Was a homely man which was lost sight of when one listened to him speak.

**JOHN S. NEWMAN (1805-1882)**

Admitted to Wayne County Bar in 1828. Elected to State Legislature in 1834. Prominent member of Convention of 1850 to revise the State Constitution. Served as President of three leading businesses: Whitewater Valley Canal Co. (1847); Indiana Central Railway; and Merchant National Bank (1851). His home was the center of culture in Centerville.

**NIMROD H. JOHNSON (1820-1869)**

Admitted to the Bar in 1843. Appointed first judge of the Common Pleas Court. Married Kate Underwood of Washington, D. C. Father of Robert Underwood and Henry U. Johnson.



**WILLIAM PEELLE (1819-1902)**

Admitted to the Bar in 1845. Elected Secretary of State (1860). In 1867, appointed Judge of the Criminal Court and in the same year represented Wayne County in State Legislature.

**JOHN F. KIBBY (1826- )**

Law partner of Oliver P. Morton. Appointed attorney general of Indiana in 1862. In 1863, appointed Military Commander of Congressional district. His career on the bench for a period of 20 years won him distinction.

**MARTIN M. RAY ( -1869)**

Admitted to Wayne County Bar in 1822. Prosecuting attorney in 1829 and again from 1840-1843. Represented Wayne County in State Legislature (1834-1835). Brother of Gov. James Ray.

**CYRUS FINCH (1794-1829)**

Editor of Western Times. Served in both branches of State Legislature. Elected to Congress. Admitted to Bar in 1820. Prosecuting attorney (1827-1828).

**JAMES F. FRAZER ( - )**

Judge of Supreme Court of the State and later a Commissioner at Washington appointed by President Grant.





**ISAAC BURBANK (     -     )**

Early merchant in Centerville. Father-in-law of Gov. Oliver P. Morton.

**ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON (1853-1937)**

Author and poet. U. S. Ambassador to Italy under Wilson's Administration. Director of Hall of Fame. Published a book, "Your Hall of Fame" in 1935. Graduate of Earlham college at the age of 18 years. Son of Nimrod H. Johnson.

**HENRY U. JOHNSON (     -     )**

Son of Nimrod H. Johnson. Elected to Indiana Senate and then to Congress (1891-1899). His histrionics during a trial was equal to Clarence Darrow. Brother of Robert Underwood Johnson.

**WILLIAM WICK (     -     )**

Secretary of State under James Ray. Was known as a shrewd lawyer. Served in the U. S Congress from 1839 to 1841 and again from 1845 to 1849.

**JOHN FINLEY (1797-1866)**

Clerk of Wayne County. Editor of Palladium (1833-1837). Author of "The Hoosier Nest," publisher in 1830, the first literary appearance of the word, "Hoosier" and had much to do with fixing the name to the people of Indiana. Mayor of Richmond, Indiana, (1852-67.)



**ISAAC H. JULIAN (1823- )**

Son of Isaac and Rebecca (Hoover) Julian. Admitted to Bar in 1851. Newspaperman. Postmaster at Centerville. Brother of George and Jacob Julian.

**DR. CALVIN J. WOOD (1819-1907)**

Surgeon in Civil War. Enlisted in U. S. Army in 1837. Served with the Indiana Sanitary Commission. Published a book on the Civil War in 1880.

**CAPT. DAVID WOOD (1820-1850)**

Lawyer. Personal friend of President Zachary Taylor with whom he had fought many Indian engagements. Was a member of first company that left Centerville for California in the Gold Rush. Was murdered in 1850 by the Indians in California whom he was trying to help.

**JAMES M. PRITCHETT (1836-1871)**

Graduate of the Naval Academy in 1857. He served with distinction and gallantry during the Civil War. Received letter of commendation from Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy for his "successful cooperation with the army in repelling an attack of a much superior force upon the troops of Gen. Prentice at Helena, Ark." An American destroyer was named in his honor.





**DR. DAVID SACKETT (1780-1865)**

First doctor in Wayne county. County Recorder. Postmaster at Salisbury and Centerville. Was one of the examiners appointed by Gov. Jennings to investigate the qualifications of physicians and to put the practice of medicine on a professional basis.

**DR. JOHN PRITCHETT (1803-1884)**

Began practice of medicine in Centerville in 1826. A very cultured man. The father of James Pritchett.

**FRANCIS KING**

Came to Centerville in the middle thirties. He was the first Auditor of Wayne County. Mr. King was a man of culture and refinement and his library was one of the best in this part of Indiana.

**JOSEPH HOLMAN**

Member of the Territorial Legislature in 1815. Appointed by President Monroe as "Receiver of Moneys" at the land office at Fort Wayne in 1823.

**HENRY BRYAN**

Farmer and first county surveyor. He and his two sisters moved to this county from New Castle, Delaware, in 1812. He laid out the town of Centerville. Was the great uncle of Dr. Bryan, former president of Indiana University.



**DAVID COMMONS**

Member of State Legislature. One of the builders of the Indiana Central Railroad and a Director for many years. Helped to secure pike roads.

**PAUL SMITH (1897- )**

Born in Center Township. President of Whittier College in California. Vice President Nixon was one of his students.

**WALTER SPAHR (1891- )**

Born in Center Township. Nationally known economist. Author of many books on the subject. Retired faculty head of the Economics Department of New York University.

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